

MQA HISTORY ARTICLE
MISSISSIPPI QUILT ASSOCIATION CELEBRATING OUR CONTINUED HISTORY: 2017-2023
By Linda Jabour
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2017

The February Gathering was MQA's 25th Anniversary Celebration in Brandon. President Julia Graber devoted her term of office to planning and preparing for this event. Attendees were not disappointed as MQA presidents, our charter members, and other special guests were recognized. There was a memorabilia table and a display of Silver Anniversary Celebration wall hangings. The Annual Business Meeting transferred leadership to Nancy Losure. **NOTE:** The January 2018 *Common Thread*, Issue 81, featured beautiful pictures of this milestone event.

President Nancy Losure's mission statement challenge: ***Recruiting the Next Generation***, asking members to recruit young quilters. Gatherings were held at Brandon, Jackson, and Hernando. Nancy practiced her theme with involvement in her guild's 4-H Club workshops for beginners.

Special Events and Achievements: Five Outstanding Quilters were honored Friday night at the June Gathering due to construction at the MS Agriculture and Forestry Museum. National Teacher Barbara Cline scheduled six 1-day classes throughout the state. PayPal was added to our website.

2018

President Lauren Hutchins's theme and mission statement: ***Grow: 1) MQA & Local Guilds, 2) Individually as Quilters, 3) The Next Generation***. Gatherings were held at Tupelo, Jackson, and Corinth.

Special Events and Achievements: National teacher Bonnie Hunter came to Mississippi. She taught three different classes as our Educational Seminar Instructor and provided a lecture and quilt-turning program at the June Gathering. Her classes coincided with the traditional June Gathering classes. While a logistic challenge, it resulted in a very positive event. The National Quilt Museum in Paducah announced they were discontinuing the adoption of individual quilts. MQA had adopted Martha Skelton's "New York Beauty" and Barbara Newman's "Stardust" in the past. The board agreed to continue to support the museum.

Dues increased to \$20 in March.

2019

President Linda Levy's mission theme and challenge: ***What if...?*** She introduced "Rose and Katheryn's Templates of basic shapes to encourage creativity. Gatherings were held at Lake Tiak-O' Khata, Jackson, and Hattiesburg.

Special Events and Achievements: MQA's website was redesigned; the platform was changed to be more user-friendly. The Board approved devoting 2020 to support the Quilt of Valor Program, working with Anne Kelley, the QOV state coordinator, **Quilts=Healing**. The Board decided to offer an Educational Seminar in alternate years due to the financial loss in recent years except for Bonnie Hunter. Ten Outstanding Quilters were recognized at the Fall Gathering.

2020

President Teresa Pino's theme and challenge was ***Giving Through Service***. The Spring Gathering was held at the Vicksburg Convention Center, and the Summer Gathering was held at Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson before the pandemic closed events down. The Board maintained

communication via Zoom Meetings. Our membership supported Teresa's theme by making and donating hundreds of masks for family and community.

Fall 2020 – Summer 2021

The pandemic required the cancellation of "real-time" Gatherings until Fall 2021.

Special Events and Achievements: MQA's leadership team and members became very creative to stay connected while being required to remain apart. Social Media communication platforms were utilized, including Judy Stokes Quilt-A-Long Sampler patterns in the ***Common Thread***. It also featured pictures of what members did during the pandemic and how they did it. The Board waived dues payments until 2022. The QOV Challenge continued to be encouraged. No Annual Business Meeting was held. The Board members agreed to continue to serve in their current positions. President-Elect and then President Charlotte Taylor's leadership kept our organization **Connected** during those two difficult years.

2021

President Charlotte Taylor's theme and challenge: ***Connection...as quilters, we connect fabric, and we connect with family and friends.***

Special Events and Achievements: In October, our first post-pandemic gathering was held at the Rankin County Safe Room, Brandon. MQA's 30th Anniversary was quietly observed with appreciation that we could again gather in person. The membership response was evident as they kept coming in, requiring additional seating. A talented group of Outstanding Quilters were honored. Charlotte's message in the January ***Common Thread*** encouraged our membership to make an investment in MQA and not just make withdrawals. *There are many opportunities to serve by sharing your talents and contributing to MQA's future.* An excellent example was Stephanie Otts, who volunteered to be our Publicity Director.

2022

President Judy Stokes' theme and mission statement: ***MQA wants YOU! MQA Wants You to STEP UP! MQA wants you to VOLUNTEER.*** Charlotte Taylor and Judy Stokes joined forces to encourage members to volunteer by signing up on several committees to understand the inner workings of MQA better and, ideally, prepare to be future leaders. We were grateful to return to our traditional three gatherings held at Starkville, Belhaven University, and Columbus.

Special Events and Achievements: The 2021 Questionnaire Response Summary was published. It identified members' feedback by identifying strengths, areas to improve, and suggestions for the future. It will become a helpful reference tool for the MQA's Leadership Team. The MQA Handbook published in 2002 was revised. It can be found on the MQA website and is electrically available on our Google Drive. MQA has improved our website's online services, including membership signup, renewal, and gathering registrations. The 6-month UFO Challenge was introduced in September. Twenty-five members participated, which concluded at the Spring Gathering in Corinth.

2023

The theme and message of President Cynthia Bates: ***It's Not Your Mama's Quilt Association. She is committed to building on MQA's historical foundation and preparing for our future success.*** Local guilds hosted gatherings in Corinth and Biloxi, with the Summer Gathering held at the Eagle Ridge Conference Center in Raymond, a new venue.

Special Events and Achievements: MQA was featured in the April issue of ***Quiltfolk***. Special Committees addressed Advertising, Membership/Management Platform Research, Electronic Records, and T-shirt Inventory Management. Gatherings: The Summer Gathering venue provided hotel rooms, classrooms, and an auditorium in one building. The Evaluation form used a QR code to collect input and identify

responses electronically. The Fall Gathering in Biloxi offered an optional extended destination stay event, including a Quilt Shop Hop with a Passport document and local attractions for the entire family. The Outstanding Quilters were recognized during the meeting. Future Planning: In preparing for future leadership needs and backup, a Membership apprentice was named, and the need for a new Electronic Records Management Director position was identified. The Board approved the recommendation to rollover the Documentation account and the Savings account into a Business Interest Checking account (BIC) to purchase a CD. In January 2024, the Board approved purchasing the ClubExpress membership application implemented for the 2024 Spring Gathering registration with many enhancements to follow.